



VISION OUTREACH SERVICES

Client Services Guide

Vision Outreach Services (VOS) helps to address the unique needs of individuals who are blind or have low vision by supporting the agencies who provide services to them and administering several federal and state programs that support people who are blind/low vision. VOS staff provides an initial consultative visit to individuals who are blind/low vision in order to identify their needs and goals related to their visual condition. These sessions may be in person, by phone or virtual, depending on client needs and VOS staff availability. Based on this visit, resources may be provided or referrals made to other agencies or to programs operated by VOS in order to try and address these goals. If staff time is available, VOS may provide training and technical assistance to early intervention programs, developmental preschools, and other agencies serving individuals who are blind/low vision in Wyoming. Services and supports available to individuals vary based on their age and the responsibility of other agencies to provide services.

Eligibility

- Individuals must have a documented vision condition that impacts their activities of daily living or education and that cannot be corrected through using prescriptive lenses or surgical procedures.
- Individuals seeking services must provide a copy of an eye report or other medical report documenting the presence of and severity of a vision condition.

Birth - 2 Years of Age

Children birth to 2 years of age who are blind or have low vision are served by the Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Health through their regional early childhood contractors.

Depending on the needs and goals of the family, VOS may:

- Answer questions about the child's vision condition and its implications;
- Connect the family with the regional early childhood program in its area;
- Coordinate an observation of the student and provide suggestions that may be helpful in designing educational programming;
- Provide training and consultative support to staff of the early childhood program supporting the child;
- Provide information on national resources for families of children who are blind/low vision;
- Provide specialized equipment to the early childhood program for use in their center or the child's home through the American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Funds; and
- Provide specialized support to families and early childhood staff working with children who have both a vision loss and a hearing loss through the Wyoming DeafBlind Project.

3 - 5 Years of Age

Children three to five years of age who are blind or have low vision are served by the Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Health through their regional developmental preschool program contractors.

Depending on the needs and goals of the family and preschool program VOS may:

- Answer questions about the child's vision condition and its implications;
- Connect families with the regional early childhood program in their area;
- Coordinate an observation of the student and provide suggestions that may be helpful in designing educational programming;
- Provide training and consultative support to the staff of the preschool program;
- Provide information on national resources for families of children who are blind/low vision;
- Provide specialized equipment to the preschool program through the American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Funds; and
- Provide specialized support to families and early childhood staff working with children who have both a vision loss and a hearing loss through the Wyoming DeafBlind Project.

5-21 Years of Age - Attending Public School

Children ages 5 - 21 with disabilities are served by the school district or public charter school in your community.

VOS may:

- Answer questions about the student's vision condition and its implications;
- Coordinate an observation of the student and provide suggestions that may be helpful in designing educational programming;
- Provide training and consultative support to school district staff;
- Provide information about national resources for families of children who are blind/low vision;
- Provide specialized equipment and accessible educational materials to the school district through the American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Funds;
- Assist school districts in locating educational materials in accessible formats, like large print and braille;
- Connect students to the National Library Services Talking Book Program for accessible recreational materials; and
- VOS can also provide this specialized support to families and educators working with children who have both a vision loss and a hearing loss, through the Wyoming DeafBlind Project.

Students Who Attend Private Schools or Are Homeschooled

The school district in which you live is responsible for identifying and evaluating children who have disabilities and are attending a private school or are homeschooled. They may also choose to support some of the needs of your child through a service plan.

VOS may:

- Answer questions about the student's vision condition and its implications;
- Coordinate an observation of the student and provide suggestions that may be helpful in designing educational programming;
- Connect families to national resources for families of children who are blind/low vision;
- Provide specialized equipment and accessible educational materials through the American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Funds;

- Connect students to the National Library Services Talking Book Program for accessible recreational materials; and
- Provide specialized support to families and educators working with children who have both a vision loss and a hearing loss through the Wyoming DeafBlind Project.

18 to 55 Years of Age

For adults, the Department of Workforce Services - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides services related to preparing for, attaining or retaining employment.

VOS may:

- Answer questions about vision conditions and their implications;
- Refer individuals to local, state, and federal programs that address needs related to blindness or low vision;
- Connect individuals to the National Library Services Talking Book Program for access to recreational reading materials;
- Provide equipment and up to six hours of client support during the first year someone is a VOS client and up to two hours in subsequent years, if new needs arise. Client support may include training. Training provided as client support may be provided to address non-employment needs related to blindness/low vision. Client support, including services and equipment, may be limited based on the program's resources. VOS generally prioritizes the needs of individuals who have not received prior support; and
- For individuals who meet the eligibility requirements, facilitate applications for the Montgomery Trust Fund for the Blind to fund training and equipment needs related to blindness and low vision.

55 Years of Age and Older

Answer questions about vision conditions and their implications;

- Refer individuals to local, state, and federal programs to meet needs related to blindness or low vision;
- Connect qualifying individuals to the National Library Services Talking Book Program for access to recreational reading materials;
- Provide equipment and up to six hours of client support during the first year someone is a VOS client and up to two hours in subsequent years, if new needs arise. Client support may include training. Training provided as client support may be provided to address non-employment needs related to blindness/low vision. Client support, including services and equipment, may be limited based on the program's resources. VOS generally prioritizes the needs of individuals who have not received prior support; and
- For individuals who meet the eligibility requirements, facilitate applications for the Montgomery Trust Fund for the Blind to fund training and equipment needs related to blindness and low vision.

Complaint Process

If for any reason, a client of VOS is dissatisfied with our services, they can file a complaint with the Wyoming Department of Education by emailing wde-vision-outreach@wyo.gov or calling 307-857-9267. Complaints must include a description of the conduct or action that is the basis for the complaint and specify the rules or statutes that have been violated. Complaints will be reviewed by the Vision Outreach Services to determine if the rules or statutes have been violated. If the State Special Education Director has a conflict of interest related to the complaint, another employee of the Wyoming Department of Education will be appointed to make the final determination on the complaint. Complainants will be notified of the results of this review and any resulting changes in service provision.